

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05
CIAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 USIA-01 ACDA-10 L-01 /051 W
-----031015 119931 /11

R 021858Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO USMISSION NATO
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9190
SECDEF WASHDC
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY THENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1625

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, FR, SP
SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO--FRENCH VIEWS

REF: USNATO 1007

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1. WE ARE THUS FAR UNABLE TO THROW FURTHER LIGHT ON THE SPANISH
AMBASSADOR IN PARIS' APPROACHES (REPORTED REFTTEL) TO THE
QUAI REGARDING SPAIN AND NATO. (A KNOWLEDGEABLE WORKING-LEVEL
OFFICER AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY EXPRESSES IGNORANCE, WHILE
SUGGESTING THAT SUCH MATTERS ARE SOMETIMES CLOSELY HELD BY HIS
SUPERIORS.) WE WOULD POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS PARTICULAR
AMBASSADOR, WHILE HE WAS STATIONED IN BRUSSELS, ENJOYED A

REPUTATION IN THE MINISTRY IN MADRID FOR ACTING WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, AND SOMETIMES UNWISELY, ON NATO-RELATED ISSUES.

2. WE EXPECT TO HAVE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS SOON WITH THE SPANISH GOVT OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH SUCH MATTERS, IN PART THROUGH THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION WITH NATO, WHICH HAS NOT YET MET.

3. OF POSSIBLE INTEREST IN THIS RESPECT IS THE VERY WAFFLED STATEMENT BY FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER BOURGES TO MADRID NEWS MAGAZINE "CAMBIO 16" AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT OF THE SPANISH FIRST VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEFENSE MATTERS TO FRANCE THE LATTER PART OF FEBRUARY (INFORMAL TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH):

"QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR VIEW, MR. MINISTER, ON THE POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF SPAIN IN NATO?

RESPONSE: FRANCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF THE OPINION THAT SPAIN IS IPSO FACTO A PART OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT AND THAT ITS PLACE IS IN THE HEART OF EUROPEAN NATIONS. THE PROBLEM OF ITS INCORPORATION INTO NATO IS, ABOVE ALL, A SPANISH PROBLEM, AND IT IS NOT FOR ME TO SPEAK TO IT. SPAIN HAS VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES, BUT I WOULD INSIST THAT THE CHOICE OF ONE OR ANOTHER DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE VIEW OF THE FRENCH GOVT. FRANCE, FOR ITS PART, IS A MEMBER OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE BUT WITHOUT INTEGRATING ITS MILITARY ORGANIZATION IN NATO, WE VIEW WITH CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY THE INTEGRATION OF SPAIN IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM. IN OUR VIEW, ITS COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL. THE MERE FACT THAT THERE EXIST VERY CAPABLE SPANISH ARMED FORCES REPRESENTS IN ITSELF A CONTRIBUTION WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY RECOGNIZED IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS."

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THE MINISTER WENT ON TO SUGGEST, IN ANSWER TO FURTHER QUESTION, THAT SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WOULD NOT AFFECT BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH FRANCE ANY MORE THAN IT DID WITH GERMANY OR ENGLAND. NOR NEED IT AFFECT SPAIN'S FUTURE CHOICE OF ARMAMENT. HE LOOKED FORWARD, AFTER HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEFENSE MATTERS OF SPAIN (GUTIERREZ MELLADO) TO EXPANDING ON A PRAGMATIC BASIS BILATERAL MILITARY COOPERATION, INCLUDING ARMS PRODUCTION.

4. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT MAY LIE BEHIND REFTTEL, THAT IN LIGHT OF FRANCO-SPANISH LIAISON ON NATO MATTERS, SPANISH INTEREST IN NATO MEMBERSHIP MAY WANE.EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, ALLIANCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MILITARY CAPABILITIES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID01625
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770073-0226
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197703101/aaaadlpd.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 684688ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2941376
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPAIN AND NATO--FRENCH VIEWS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, SP, NATO
To: NATO BRUSSELS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/684688ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009